

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 04294 01 OF 02 122147Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 AID-05 EUR-12 EB-07 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 /089 W

----- 104598

R 092123Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8540

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 4294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CO

SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING THE COURSE OF A RELATIVELY QUIET WEEK, COLOMBIANS MANIFESTED MORE INTEREST IN EVENTS BEYOND THEIR OWN BORDERS THAN IN THE RELATIVELY STATIC DOMESTIC SITUATION. THE OPENING OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE FLURRY OF STATEMENTS FROM HAVANA AND WASHDC ON THE QUESTION OF CUBAN-U.S. RELATIONS BOTH ENGENDERED A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE AMONG LOCAL POLITICANS AND JOURNALISTS. THE BOGOTA PRESS COMMEMORATED THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY WITH NUMEROUS ARTICLES, MANY OF WHICH EMPHASIZED THE DECISIVE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN THE DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY. ON THE DOMESTIC SCENE THE LIBERAL PARTY CONTINUED ITS ETERNAL QUEST FOR UNITY AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF ONGOING FACTIONALISM AND POLITICAL MANEUVERING. INFLATION CONTINUED, ALTHOUGH THE RATE OF INCREASE WAS SOMEWHAT LOWER. THE DATA OUTLINING THE LOWER RATE OF INCREASE, HOWEVER, PROVIDED SCANT COMFORT TO BOGOTANOS WHO HAVE SEEN ALMOST EVERY NECESSITY (EXCEPT A FEW PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) INCREASE IN PRICE DURING THE PAST YEAR. LATE IN THE WEEK, EL TIEMPO BOGOTAS LEADING DAILY PUBLISHED ON ITS FIRST PAGE A U.S. SPACE PHOTOGRAPH WHICH SHOWED COLOMBIA UNDER A

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 04294 01 OF 02 122147Z

SOLID BLANKET OF GREY CLOUDS. TO THE BOGOTANOS, SUBJECTED

TO DAILY DOWNPOURS AND WEEKS OF RAW COLD WEATHER, THIS EXPLANATION TOO PROVIDED LITTLE COMFORT AND SCANT PROSPECTS OF RELIEF. END SUMMARY

2. SECOND LIBERAL PARTY SUMMIT MEETING. THE LIBERAL PARTY CENTRAL POLITICAL

COMMISSION, INCLUDING FORMER

PRESIDENTS DAIRÓ ECHANDÍA AND CARLOS LLERAS MET FOR THE SECOND TIME MAY 6. AS AGREED TO IN THE FIRST MEETING

(BOGOTÁ 3846) THE PARTY LEADERS DIRECTED THE LIBERAL PARTY DIRECTORATE (DNL) CONSISTING OF SENATORS GUSTAVO BALCAZAR, JUAN JOSE TURBAY AND VÍCTOR MOSQUERA TO CONDUCT AN OPINION POLL AMONG LIBERALS OF ALL STRIPES CONCERNING THE KINDS OF REFORMS DESIRED IN THE LIBERAL PARTY CONSTITUTION IN PREPARATION FOR THE 1978 CONVENTION, AND THE SUPPORT FOR A SEPARATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS. THE DNL WAS ALSO AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 20 WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ. THE DNL IS TO INFORM THE POLITICAL COMMISSION OF ITS FINDINGS AT THE NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED EITHER FOR MAY 21 OR 28.

WHILE THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN A GENERAL AIR OF CORDIALITY, SOME SUPPORTERS OF AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES JULIO CESAR TURBAY ACCUSED LLERAS OF ATTEMPTING TO USE THE MEETING AS A PLATFORM TO LAUNCH HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE 1978 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY AND TO ESTABLISH THE BASIS FOR A RAPPROCHMENT WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ (IT WAS LLERAS WHO PROPOSED THAT THE DNL CONSULT WITH LOPEZ). LLERAS RESPONDED "I WILL PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS UNTIL I AM KICKED OUT" BUT DENIED THAT HE WAS SEEKING THE PARTY'S NOMINATION.

3. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING LLERAS DEPARTED FOR BUCARAMANGA ON MAY 9 TO PARTICIPATE IN CEREMONIES HONORING THE LIBERAL NEWSPAPER EL LIBERAL AND TO MAKE PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN OTHER CITIES OF SANTANDER, AGAIN RAISING AMONG HIS DETRACTORS AND SOME SUPPORTERS THE QUESTION OF THE 1978 ELECTIONS. TO THIS LLERAS COMMENTED: "I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THERE IS SO MUCH DISCUSSION OF CANDIDACIES. I MAY SPEAK ABOUT COFFEE IN MANIZALES AND TURBAY ABOUT ENERGY PROBLEMS IN BARRANQUILLA, BUT NOBODY ACCUSES HIM OF SPEAKING ABOUT BEING A CANDIDATE". THIS COMMENT TENDS TO CONFIRM THE GENERAL OPINION THAT ABOVE ALL ELSE LLERAS CURRENT ACTIVITIES REFLECT HIS CONTINUING

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTÁ 04294 01 OF 02 122147Z

HOSTILITY TO TURBAY.

4. CONSERVATIVE PARTY SEEKS TO DEFINE RELATIONS WITH LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION. WHILE THE LIBERAL PARTY INVOLVED ITSELF WITH DEFINING ITS FUTURE INTERNAL RELATIONS, THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADERSHIP DURING THE WEEK FINALLY ESTABLISHED ITS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION. IN A LETTER TO THE ANTIOQUIA CONSERVATIVE PARTY DIRECTORATE MAY 7, THE NATIONAL

CONSERVATIVE DIRECTORATE (DNC) STATED THAT IN VIEW OF THE LACK OF PRECEDENTS TO THE TRANSITIONAL LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION WHICH IS PAVING THE WAY FOR THE END OF THE NATIONAL FRONT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN COLOMBIA IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MANY PEOPLE, WHETHER OR NOT CONSERVATIVE PARTY SUPPORTERS TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE CONSERVATIVES IN THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION; HAVING LOST THE ELECTION, YET SHARING HALF OF THE APPOINTIVE POSITIONS, AND PARTICIPATING IN THE FORMATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT THOSE OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY PLATFORM. NOTING COMMON INTERESTS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE PARTIES, THE DNC STATED THAT THE POSITION OF THE PARTY WITH RESPECT TO THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION HAD TO BE ONE OF "RESPONSIBLE SOLIDARITY". THIS POLICY, THE DNC EXPLAINED, INVOLVED GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE LOPEZ PROGRAM, WITH ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM OF THOSE ASPECTS THOUGHT TO BE UNFAVORABLE. WHILE EXPRESSING UNDERSTANDING FOR THOSE IN THE PARTY WHO MIGHT WISH TO EXPLOIT ALLEGED FAILURES OF THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE, THE DNC CALLED SUCH ACTION UNPATRIOTIC. THUS THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY SEEMED TO DEFINE ITS POSITION AS WATCHING AND WAITING, HOPING THAT THE MACHINATIONS IN THE LIBERAL PARTY WILL LEAD TO A DIVISION AND FORCE

THE CONSERVATIVES TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THEIR ROLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 04294 02 OF 02 122149Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 AID-05 EUR-12 EB-07 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 /089 W

----- 104626

R 092123Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO XECSTATE WASHDC 8552

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 4294

5. RATE OF INFLATION.

APRIL COST OF LIVING DATA

INDICATE THAT THE GOC CONTINUES TO MEET WITH MODERATE SUCCESS IN ITS EFFORTS TO BRING INFLATION UNDER CONTROL. THE APRIL 1975 INCREASE WAS 2.4 VERSUS A 2.6 INCREASE IN APRIL 1974. ALTHOUGH THE REDUCED GROWTH RATE FOR APRIL IS SLIGHT, IT MARKS THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE MONTH THAT THE INDEX HAS INCREASED LESS THAN IN THE PREVIOUS MONTH (THE JAN DIFFERENCE WAS EVEN SMALLER AT .05 PERCENT). THE TOTAL INCREASE THUS FAR IN 1975 HAS BEEN 9.85 PERCENT VERSUS 11.55 PERCENT IN 1974. WITH THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS GENERALLY SHOWING ONLY MINOR INCREASES IN THE INDEX, PROSPECTS ARE RELATIVELY GOOD FOR MEETING THE ADMINISTRATION GOAL OF ONLY A 20 PERCENT INCREASE FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR. IN THE LAST QUARTER, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF WORKING AGAINST UNUSUALLY HIGH 1974 INCREASES STEMMING FROM ITS OWN INITIAL POLICIES. AT THE SAME TIME AN ARGUMENT STRONGLY FAVORING THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS THAT IT IS MAKING HEADWAY AGAINST INFLATION WHILE AT THE SAME TIME LOOSENING SOME OF THE ARTIFICIAL RESTRAINTS UTILIZED BY THE PASTRANA ADMINISTRATION. GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES AND MONEY SUPPLY ARE ALSO MOVING MORE FREELY THAN DURING 1974.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 04294 02 OF 02 122149Z

6. CUBAN TRADE MISSION. GOC OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THAT A CUBAN TRADE MISSION IS EXPECTED TO VISIT COLOMBIA DURING THE PERIOD OF MAY 5-19. THE PHRASEOLOGY OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTS THAT AN EFFORT MAY BE MADE DURING THE VISIT TO DRAW UP SOME TYPE OF FORMAL TRADE AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN TRADE INSTITUTE, CUBA IS INTERESTED IN PURCHASING COLOMBIAN CEMENT, RICE, BEANS, CORN, COTTON AND ARTIFICIAL FIBERS AND LUMBER, FERTILIZER AND METALLURGICAL PRODUCTS. COLOMBIA IS CONSIDERING IMPORTS OF NICKEL, RUM, CIGARS, AND BOOKS. GIVEN DOMESTIC SHORTAGES, THE INCLUSION OF CEMENT, CORN AND FERTILIZER IS SOMEWHAT INCONGRUOUS AS ARE IMPORTS OF RUM AND BOOKS WHICH ARE MAJOR ITEMS OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND HIGHLY PROTECTED.

7. JOCKEYING IN THE UNION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC)

FOLLOWING CONGRES. WHILE STATING THAT THEY WOULD ACCEPT THE UTC CONGRESS VOTE REELECTING TULIO VUEVAS AS PRESIDENT (CALI 0202) ALVARO RAMIREZ AND FOLLOWERS BEGAN A SERIES OF MANEUVERS DURING THE WEEK WHICH THREATENED THE UNITY OF THE UTC. FORMING A SHADOW UTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND

ALLUDING TO THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A NEW CONFEDERATION, RAMIREZ MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS POLITICAL AND PERSONAL BATTLE WITH CUEVAS WAS FAR FROM OVER. WHILE MANY LABOR OBSERVERS CONTINUED TO EXPRESS BELIEF THAT THE CURRENT DISSIDENTS LIKE THOSE FOLLOWING PREVIOUS CONGRESSES WOULD EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE UTC FOLD, THESE OBSERVERS APPEARED TO LACK THE SENSE OF CONVICTION THEY POSSESSED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE UTC CONGRESS WHICH ENDED MAY 1.

8. MEANWHILE, THE NEWLY ELECTED UTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS TOOK OFFICE WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT CHANGES COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS BOARD. THE MOST IMPORTANT INVOLVED JORGE CARRILLO, FORMERLY SECRETARY GENERAL, WHO IS NOW

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT, JESUS CARDENAS, A LOPEZ SUPPORTER, AND CURRENT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CARTAGENA CITY ADMINISTRATION WHO REPLACES CARILLO AS UTC SECRETARY GENERAL JORGE TOFINO, WHO SUCCESS ANTONIO BELTRAN (A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 04294 02 OF 02 122149Z

SUPPORTER OF RAMREZ) AS SECRETARY OF FINANCES, AND TEODULO CABRERA, WHO BECOMES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. CABRERA, HEAD OF THE UTC METALLAUGICAL UNION, IS A KNOWN CRITIC OF PAST RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UTC AND THE AMERICAN INSTIUTE FOR FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD). SOME OBSERVERS HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE NEW BOARD IS A TEMPORARY ONE, AND WILL BE MODIFIED WHEN RAMIREZ AND COMPANY AGREE TO WORK WITHIN THE EXISTING UTC STRUCTURE. THESE OBSERVERS ARE PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH THE ELECTION OF CARRILLO AS FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH

THEY CLAIM MAY INDICATE THE IMMINENT RESIGNATION OF CUEVAS. BY WEEKS'S END THE SPECULATION ON CUEVAS FUTURE HAD INCREASED.
VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA04294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750166-0075
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750564/aaaacflp.tel
Line Count: 262
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006